

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) today joined his colleagues from both sides of the aisle in calling for President Bush to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an effort to lower oil prices.

"The president has one tool that could immediately lower the price of gas, drawing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve," Rep. Farr said. "But he refuses to consider this common-sense proposal, even though members of his own party agree the move is necessary."

The SPR is a 700-million-barrel supply of oil, purchased with taxpayer funds, to be used in an emergency. Democrats and a growing number of Republicans consider current gas prices just such an emergency and have called on the president to release a portion of the reserve to help reduce the price of oil.

"President Bush refused to stop filling the reserve until Congress passed a bill directing him to do so. Now, we find him again digging in his heels, refusing to take action to reduce the price at the pump," Rep. Farr said. "We need leadership from the White House, but sadly we're not seeing it."

Previous releases from the SPR:

- In 1991, President George H.W. Bush withdrew oil from the SPR ahead of the first Gulf War. The effect was immediate: oil prices dropped 33.4 percent over the following two days.
- In 2000, President Bill Clinton authorized a swap of oil in which 30 million barrels were released from the SPR to address rising oil costs. Again, the results were immediate: prices dropped almost 20 percent within a week.
- In 2005, President Bush offered 30 million barrels of SPR oil (only 11 million gallons were actually withdrawn), which helped reduce crude prices by about \$5 a barrel.

"Republicans say 'drill, drill, drill.' What they fail to admit is that 80 percent of offshore oil is already available to oil companies," Rep. Farr said. "Oil companies are using only 24 percent of their leases on the Outer Continental Shelf and only 7 percent of their leases in

the Gulf of Mexico. What we are seeing is greed at its very worst, and all Americans are suffering for it."

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